

# December 2017

## Holiday Safety

Week 1: Christmas Tree Safety

Week 2: Holiday Decoration Hazards

Week 3: Holiday Cooking Safety

Week 4: New Year's Eve And Fireworks

Events: TBD

### Educator Tips:

Use your NFIRS data and provide information on your community's most common types of fire calls and ways to avoid those situations. If you don't have your own data, you can use the statewide or national data. Make flyers available with tips on how to avoid these calls.

### National Fire Service History:

- December 5, 1876 - NY Theater Fire (300 deaths)
- December 30, 1903 - Iroquois Theatre Fire (602 deaths)
- December 22, 1910 - Chicago Stockyard Fire (21 FF's killed)
- December 22, 1910 - PA Leather Factory Fire (13 FF's killed)
- December 7, 1946 - Atlanta Winecoff Hotel Disaster (119 deaths)
- December 1, 1958 - Our Lady of Angels School Fire (95 deaths)
- December 29, 1963 - Roosevelt Hotel Fire (21 guests and 1 FF's killed)
- December 3, 1999 - Cold Storage Warehouse Fire (6 FF's killed)

### WV Fire Service History:

- On December 27, 1934, a boiler in a locomotive hauling mine workers at McDunn in Fayette County exploded, resulting in the death of eighteen miners.



## Christmas Tree Safety

Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious.

### *Picking the tree:*

- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.

### *Placing the tree:*

- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2" from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.

### *Lighting the tree:*

- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

### *After Christmas:*

- Get rid of the tree after Christmas. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

National estimates of reported home structure fires during the five-year period from 2009 to 2013, Christmas trees were the item first ignited in an average of 210 reported home structure fires per year, resulting in an annual average of seven civilian fire deaths, 19 civilian fire injuries, and \$17.5 million in direct property damage.

On average, one of every 31 reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in a death, compared to an average of one death per 144 total reported home fires.

# Christmas Tree Safety



As you deck the halls this holiday season, be fire smart. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly.



## PICKING THE TREE

- » Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.



## PLACING THE TREE

- » Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2" from the base of the trunk.
- » Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- » Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- » Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.



## LIGHTING THE TREE

- » Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.
- » Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of LED strands to connect.
- » Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- » Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

## After Christmas

Get rid of the tree after Christmas or when it is dry. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home. Check with your local community to find a recycling program. Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.



## FACTS

- ! **One** of every three home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
- ! Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious.
- ! A heat source too close to the tree causes roughly **one in every six** of the fires.



Your Source for **SAFETY** Information

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)



## Holiday Decoration Hazards

### *Decorative Lights:*

- Inspect light strings, and throw out any with frayed or cracked wires or broken sockets. When decorating, don't run more than three strings of lights end to end. Extension cords should be in good condition and UL-rated for indoor or outdoor use. Check outdoor receptacles to make sure the ground fault interrupters don't trip. If they trip repeatedly that's a sign that they need to be replaced.
- When hanging lights outside, avoid using nails or staples, which can damage the wiring and increase the risk of a fire. Instead, use UL-rated clips or hangers. And take lights down within 90 days
- Do not attempt to repair a worn light set! Throw it away and purchase a new replacement.
- Do not overload electrical outlets. Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe.
- Do not leave lights turned on for prolonged periods or unattended.
- In addition to being shatterproof and shock resistant, LED lights produce almost no heat, making them safe to touch and greatly reducing the risk of fire.

### *Decorations:*

- Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep decorations away from heat sources, windows and doors.
- Decorative lighted villages, Nativity scenes, electric trains, and other electrically powered scenery and figures should be monitored like other decorative lights.
- Keep all the wrapping paper in one place and throw it away immediately after you're done unwrapping gifts. Never burn gift wrapping paper because it burns quickly and could start a flash fire.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid sharp, weighted or breakable decorations, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children who could swallow or inhale small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.

### *Storing Decorations After The Holidays:*

Storing Christmas decorations also requires safety measures to be taken. The following are some safety tips that the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Underwriters Laboratories urge consumers to use when using and storing their holiday decorations:

- Unplug electric decorations by using the gripping area provided on the plugs. Never pull the cord to unplug a device from electrical outlets. Pulling on the cord can damage the cord's wire and insulation and even lead to an electrical shock or fire.
- Take the time to inspect your light string for flaws. Throw out light sets if they have loose connections, broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires. Do not place a faulty set of lights back into the storage box for next year's use. Take the initiative now and throw out worn light strings. Shop for replacements during after-Christmas sales or add lights to your Christmas decoration list for next year.

- Be sure to pack lights appropriately to prevent the need to untangle a web of lights next year. When preparing your holiday lights for storage, consider purchasing a holiday light storage reel, or create your own system.
- Store electrical decorations in a dry place, such as a suitcase, where they cannot be damaged by water or dampness. Also, keep them away from children and pets to ensure that cords and wires are not damaged in storage.
- Wrap each set of lights and put them in individual plastic bags, or wrap the lights around an empty wrapping paper tube or cardboard square. If you wrap the lights around a piece of cardboard, cut a slit in one side of the square. Thread the end of a set of lights through the slit. Wrap the lights around the cardboard, threading the other end back through the slit.
- Although the box your artificial tree came in may seem like the perfect one to repack it in for storing, this isn't the wisest idea for preservation. The cardboard boxes begin to deteriorate making them more prone to insect infestation. Consider purchasing a tree storage bag instead.
- Special ornaments benefit from being stored in their original packaging. If you throw out the original box, store smaller ornaments in an egg carton or ornament specific storage bag.
- Save yourself time next year by thoroughly labeling decorations before storing. Make a detailed inventory on the outside of each container. Number each to keep track of how many you have (for example, Box 1 of 12) and consider taping a piece of wrapping paper on the outside of each container for easy holiday storage identification.





## Holiday Cooking Safety

The holiday season means holiday parties, holiday shopping, and plenty of holiday cooking. With so much time being spent in the kitchen, homes are at a higher risk for cooking fires. Here are some tips on how to avoid a holiday cooking fire in your kitchen.

- Keep children out of the kitchen when holiday cooking is taking place. Children can easily cause spills, which could lead to a holiday cooking fire.
- When working around an open flame or heated surface, remove any paper or plastic materials from the area.
- When grilling, frying, or boiling food, never leave the stove unattended. You are working with flammable grease and oil at high temperatures, making the situation vulnerable to a holiday cooking fire. Should you need to leave the kitchen, turn off the stove or ask a family member to watch the stove.
- Be aware of foods left to boil or simmer on your stovetop. While these items are a tad safer to leave unattended, it's important to monitor your food while setting a timer to avoid burns.
- Never wear long sleeves while cooking over an open flame. Clothing can easily catch flame, causing an unwanted and dangerous holiday cooking fire.
- Should a fire occur on your stovetop, turn off the heat source if you can do so safely. Then slide a lid over your pan or pot to smother the flames. Never try to remove the pot or pan from the stove while flames or smoke are visible.
- Should an oven fire occur, keep the door to the oven closed and turn off the heat source if you can do so safely.
- Should a holiday cooking fire occur, call your local fire department immediately. Ensure that all family members and friends know safe ways to leave your home should a fire occur.
- When a holiday cooking fire is possible, your home should have a portable fire extinguisher on hand at all times. A Class K extinguisher is best used in scenarios involving flammable cooking materials such as grease or oil.
- Never use water on a grease fire, because it can spread the burning grease around the kitchen.
- If there is a microwave fire, keep the door closed and unplug the microwave.
- Use extreme caution with outdoor deep fryers typically used for turkey. Make sure it's not located too close to the house and follow manufacture instructions. Never leave a deep fryer unattended, even for a minute.

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Holiday

## Cooking Safety Tips



1

Assign a Cooking Coordinator



2

Use Safe Knife Skills



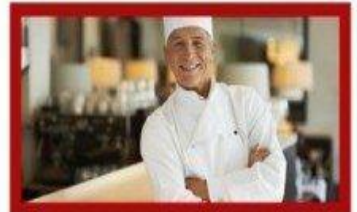
3

Monitor the Walkway



4

Wear Proper Cooking Attire



5

Practice Table Safety





## **New Year's Eve Fireworks**

(from [www.fireworkssafety.org](http://www.fireworkssafety.org))

New Year's Eve is a wonderful time to celebrate the start of a new year. And fireworks are a wonderful way of celebrating. However, all too often, New Year's Eve festivities involve excess alcohol. Just like driving and drinking do not mix, shooting consumer fireworks and drinking absolutely do not mix, says the National Council on Fireworks Safety.

Any person attending a party for New Year's Eve where consumer fireworks are being shot, should make sure that there is a designated shooter who has not been drinking any alcohol. Even a small quantity of alcohol (one beer, a glass of wine) can impair one's judgment and ability to properly set up and use consumer fireworks safely.

Nancy Blogin, President of the National Council on Fireworks Safety notes: "Each New Year's Eve, consumers are injured because their judgment has been impaired by beer, wine, or other alcoholic drink. In the past several years, there have been reports of accidents where the person that was injured had been under the influence of alcohol and did not handle the fireworks in a responsible way. The lesson is simple: alcohol and fireworks don't mix."

In addition, the National Council reminds shooters of consumer fireworks of these other important safety tips:

- Only use fireworks outdoors.
- Use fireworks as directed on the product label.
- Obey all local laws regarding the use of fireworks.
- Never give fireworks to young children.
- Wear safety glasses when shooting fireworks.
- Always have a bucket of water, or water hose, nearby.

And remember, **ALCOHOL AND FIREWORKS DON'T MIX!**

# Fireworks Safety

Light up the night. And, stay safe.

Whether you like to light a sparkler or two or plan the most eye-catching display in your neighborhood, here are a few quick tips to keep in mind before you start the show.

## Keep it legal.

The majority of injuries sustained from fireworks result from illegal fireworks. Buy only legal fireworks. Looking for a quick way to tell what's legal? Avoid fireworks packaged in brown paper. (That's usually an indication that those particular fireworks were made for professional displays and not intended for consumers.)

## Keep water close.

Always have a bucket of water nearby in case of an emergency. As an extra precaution, douse burned fireworks with water before discarding them in the trash.

## Keep away.

Once you've lit the fuse, back up immediately and maintain a safe distance. What if one of your fireworks doesn't do what it's supposed to do? Douse it with water. Do not attempt to retrieve or reignite a fireworks device that did not light properly.